OBITUARIES

William Bradford Huie, 76, Writer And Crusader for Civil Rights, Dies

From News Services

William Bradford Huie, 76, a southern-born journalist and writer who was a lifelong crusader against racism, was found dead Nov. 22 at his office in Guntersville, Ala. He had died after an apparent heart attack.

Mr. Huie wrote for newspapers and magazines and was the author of more than 20 novels and works of nonfiction. Six of his books were made into movies, among them "The Americanization of Emily" starring Julie Andrews and James Garner, "The Klansman" with Richard Burton, "Wild River" with Montgomery Clift and Lee Remick and "The Execution of Private Slovik," about the only American serviceman shot for desertion during World War II.

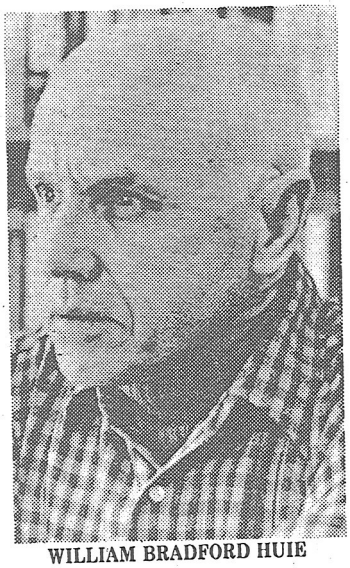
Much of his work concerned violence and the civil rights movement. He wrote such civil rights books as "The Klansman," "Three Lives For Mississippi" and "He Slew The Dreamer," a biography of Martin Luther King Jr.'s convicted assassin, James Earl Ray.

Many of Mr. Huie's books, both fiction and nonfiction, resulted in great controversy. In 1954, while researching for "Ruby McCollum," the story of a black woman accused of murdering a white doctor in Florida, he was convicted of contempt of court for trying to influence a psychiatrist who was a witness in the case.

He was jailed for contempt for his involvement with James Earl Ray, who killed King in 1968. He paid Ray about $35,000 for information on the killing because he wanted "to get at the truth."

"I paid Ray because I knew no lawyer in the world would call him to testify and no one would ever know the truth," Mr. Huie said.

He used Ray, who pleaded guilty and was given a 99-year prison term, as the subject of three Look magazine articles as well as a book.



WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE

At the time of his death, Mr. Huie was working on a novel, "Deep Dixie," concerning the Alabama National Guard's involvement in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion.

Mr. Huie was a 1930 graduate of the University of Alabama graduate. He then worked for the Birmingham (Alabama) Post newspapers and wrote free-lance magazine articles for Time, Look, The Saturday Evening Post and True. He also wrote for the old New York Herald Tribune newspaper before he began to write books.

Mr. Huie maintained homes in Guntersville, Hartselle and Scottsboro, Ala. Survivors include his wife, mother, brother and sister.